

Vol. 1, Number 21  
February 19, 1970

published by  
the information  
office  
sir george  
williams  
university

# SGWU ISSUES & EVENTS

## *Theatre has always been dying and it's still here!*

If academic considerations didn't have to come first, "Hair" would have been staged at Sir George, according to Theatre Arts director Norma Springford. "It was impossible of course, though it was too bad because it's a show the kids like," Professor Springford commented, after explaining that she had been approached several months ago about the possibility of having it here. The stage, she said, couldn't be tied up for a month, let alone any further time.

But that's not to say she has to deal with her students that way. "I can't," she said, "tell them to do this and do that. I let them follow their own interests and watch them wade into a lot of difficult work." Mrs. Springford explained that she wanted the Theatre Arts program to provide more of a background for students than actual theatre training. "By third year, students are prepared to make a choice whether or not to go into some field of the theatre," she said. "After all, you can't just tell a student who knows practically nothing about a particular field to make a decision that will affect him for the rest of his life."

### **Stage design to production**

The Theatre Arts section offers eight courses ranging from stage design and costuming to the history of theatre and various introductory and advanced courses on production. Other courses include creative drama in the schools and voice training. In addition to Professor Springford's lectures, Stage Supervisor Lucien Côté lectures in stage design, and instructors are invited in from the National Theatre School. Students also participate in professional productions by the CBC, acting as stage assistants, and go on field trips to study technical operations at other theatres in Montreal.

The program is designed to cover all aspects of theatre, from box office sales to publicity. "I would like to cover all aspects of employment," Mrs. Springford said, "and I would like to see several sections added to the present system. I would hope that we will be able to establish a full dance section where we can offer the history of dance and have seminars in ethnic dances."

But this, Mrs. Springford says, is all for

background material and she doesn't envisage the Theatre Arts section expanding into a professional school: "Why go into competition with the National Theatre School, one of the best schools in North America, right here in Montreal?" Why indeed, as some of her graduates have gone on to the National Theatre School and to drama schools as far away as London, while others have joined professional companies from New York to Paris.

### **Theatre for schools stressed**

The Theatre Arts director would like to expand both the technical and educational sections of the course. Expansion on the educational side, Mrs. Springford explained, would mean producing more and more people to teach theatre arts in the primary and secondary schools across the province. "In British Columbia," she said, "theatre courses are given as early as grade nine, while similar moves are going on in Ontario. It won't be long before the movement sweeps Quebec," she warned. This is the result in part, Mrs. Springford said, of the growing interest

in the humanities, of man digging into his environment.

Students have put much of their time into children's theatre, recently staging several shows in schools around Montreal at practically no cost to their audiences. The schools agreed to pay royalty fees and transportation in order to help the touring group around their already strapped theatre budget. Perhaps the most memorable tour was their trip to Caughnawaga where they presented "The Hat" to some 300 Indian children.

### **Building an audience**

"This is one of the reasons that we try not to charge admission," Mrs. Springford said. "If you want to build up an audience you have to get people interested, particularly the children of this coming generation. Just recently we had 150 students from Strathern School come in for a production." Shortly after explaining this, Mrs. Springford was interrupted by a telephone call from a teacher in the Little Burgundy area wanting some information about bringing a troupe of

young students in for the Collection series. "I want more and more schools and service clubs to bring the children into the theatre," she said. Mrs. Springford conceded that film is hurting the theatre. "After all, it's the medium, it's the language of this generation and probably the next and the next." But statistics are pretty encouraging. According to her own records of attendance at the theatre here, over 90 percent of the audience are young people. And the remainder are usually parents and other adults interested in an involvement with the theatre, she said. Added to that, Mrs. Springford hopes that the mass of educated people coming out of universities today will become increasingly interested in thea-

*continued on page 2*



**Theatre Arts director Norma Springford says people should stop complaining about Montreal theatre and do something about it.**



# theatre's jack- of-all- trades

Stage Supervisor Lucien Côté goes through his seven-day work week making sure that students aren't killing themselves falling from the rigging, teaching courses in general backstage work and keeping the stage functioning in top order. He describes himself rather modestly as "a jack-of-all-trades and master of none."

"My one goal in life is to train someone to take over my work," he says.

Côté went into theatre life early, shortly after he quits his Grand Trunk Railway job because telephones were replacing call boys. From there he became an usher with a number of theatre houses around Montreal and in the late 20's moved several steps up the ladder as a film projector operator. "I did have some parts in the theatre," Côté said referring to his brief efforts as a chorus boy and in several other minor parts, "but I took stage fright and decided to stay backstage."

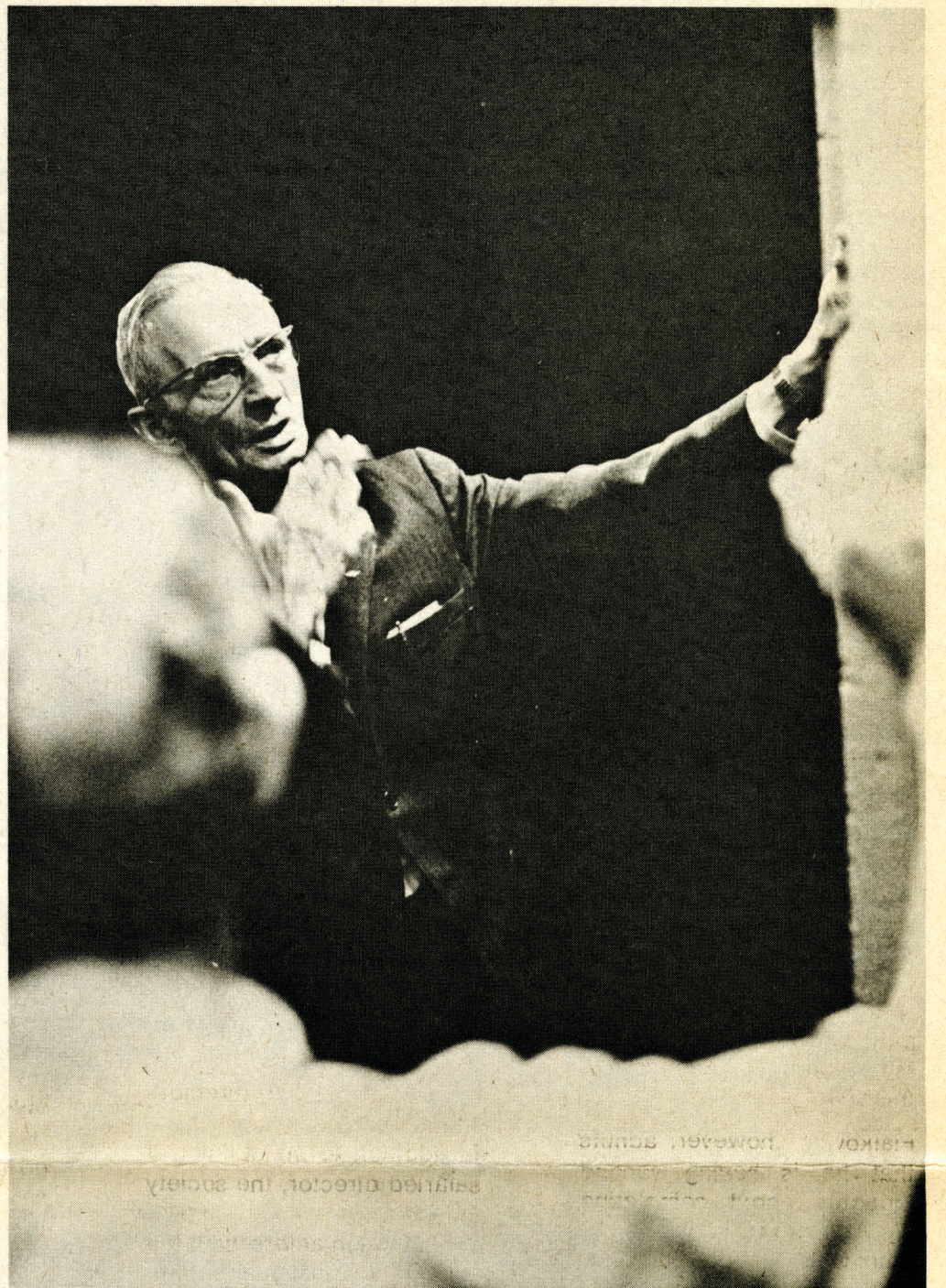
The Stage Supervisor did say that he had earlier played several parts in some of the French classics like "Les Deux Orphelines" and in some Passion plays, but confirmed that he never did recover from his one bout with stage fright. His backstage experience is long and varied, with technical work around the Montreal circuit of theatres and arenas, rigging them for lighting and other stage equipment. His work has taken him as far away as New York and London.

Theatre ranged from ballet to burlesque and Côté easily recalls some of Montreal's theatres of old like the Gaiety and Mayfair, the Fifth Avenue and the King Edward. Côté described the Douglass Burns Clarke Theatre as one of the finest. "I can put on anything that Place des Arts can do except that we don't have as much depth here. But most of the time we can do the same thing," he said. Even with the 53 foot depth of the stage, Côté said Sir George can fly many thousand pounds of set equipment.

Lucien Côté likes it natural and this best explains his love of theatre work. "Everything comes out of a can today," he said explaining his abhorrence of things electric and loud. "For me, it's no fun getting my ears blasted." Modern theatre didn't escape criticism either. "It used to be that people used themselves, their own voices. There are too many gimmicks today," he complained.

He said that although there had been a great many technical advances since he came to the theatre, the basic materials for stage sets hadn't changed. "Cotton is still the basic material that we use," he said. Côté cited plastics and lighting equipment as major breakthroughs. But the expense of the theatre, he said, was making touring today almost impossible, particularly because of the great transportation costs.

The veteran stage technician felt that



Lucien Côté, Stage Supervisor, has known where everything goes for many years.

there could be a healthy future for the theatre even though it was livelier in the old days. "I can't understand why there isn't strong English theatre here," he said. Time will bring back the theatre that television and movies have taken away."

Teaching backstage work involves everything from carpentry to opening the curtain. "We have to do most of the work here building our sets," he said. Côté explained that one big problem today was obtaining period furniture pieces now that the various agencies had closed their doors because of the dying trade.

"The only people who have these things

are the antique dealers," he said, "and they won't give them up."

To widen students' technical experiences, Côté organizes various field trips to other Montreal theatres. Many of the groups that use the theatre, such as the CBC, use student technicians in much of their stage work.

"Sometimes," Côté admitted, "I do things that people tell me not to do," he said, referring to working with lights and set equipment in the rigging above stage. "But I'm small and light so I can do that kind of work. But," he underlined, "I never tell anyone to do anything I can't do."

## Theatre... it's still here! (continued)

tre. "It may be that theatre will have a specialized audience though, I don't know," she said.

### Participatory theatre

"But ever since I came to Montreal in 1941, people have always said that the theatre is dying in Montreal. And it still goes on and they still say its dying." Mrs. Springford pointed out that there was a good deal going on in the Montreal area between the various university and professional groups as well as fringe theatre

which, according to the Fine Arts professor, has always been going on. "And just pick up a paper to see all the French theatre that's going on," she said. Slightly annoyed at all these complaints, Mrs. Springford commented: "I just wish that all these people who moan about Montreal theatre would get out and involve themselves in it instead of sitting around and complaining about it."

### In days of old

Involved Mrs. Springford is. Working for

groups such as the Montreal Community Theatre in the early 40's, Mrs. Springford later directed the McGill University Theatre Club from 1950 to 1959 and also ran the Mountain Playhouse for 13 years until the building was demolished by its owners in 1963, notwithstanding its comparatively healthy condition as a theatre at the time. Douglass Burns Clarke, then Academic Vice-Principal asked her to participate in the planning of the Hall Building theatre and shortly after asked her to begin a Theatre Arts course for

evening students. From that point on the Theatre Arts section ballooned into the comprehensive and still growing program it is today.

Mrs. Springford would like to see more touring done by the students. Last year one student made out an extensive budget and touring plan which would have taken a company from Sir George into eastern Ontario to stage several shows all for a cost of \$11,000. "It would probably be up to 13 now," Mrs. Springford said, "But I'd still love to do it."



**Theatre Arts**

**rehearsing**

**"Cry in the Street"**



# **Boyfriend's boyfriend veteran at 21**

Peter Fialkowski, at 21, is already something of a veteran actor. When he bows out from Marat/Sade in March, he will have completed a record 12 major productions at Sir George. Although he has given his university years to the theatre, the arrangement hasn't been wholly reciprocal. "I failed my first year after taking part in five productions, recovered the next year by acting in only one play, and with Boyfriend and Marat/Sade I'll probably fail this year."

Fialkowski, however, admits that he is having second thoughts about completing his Arts program and is beginning to think seriously of devoting all his energies to full time acting or at least going on to a theatre school. "I haven't really sent any resumes to anyone but I am thinking of possibly going to England," Fialkowski said.

He was rehearsing with the Georgian Players cast of "The Boyfriend", now running through February 28. "I really prefer working with people with a sense of humour," he said, referring to the others in the Boyfriend cast. "So many theatre people now seem to be wrapped up in plays that are serious and steeped with deep meaning," he commented. The third year student said he felt that this seemed to be one of the differences

that set the Georgian Players apart from the Theatre Arts section in a very general sense. "The Georgian Players usually produce more contemporary work, if not light-hearted," he said. One of the advantages that the Georgian Players had, Fialkowski said, was that on the whole the group seemed to have a healthier budget. "The production we're rehearsing for now will cost something like \$6,000," he said. "Much of the time we have professional directors which is an obvious asset." In addition to maintaining a salaried director, the society manages to pay the stage crew, though actors, with the exception of last year's Summer Festival of Arts, are not usually paid.

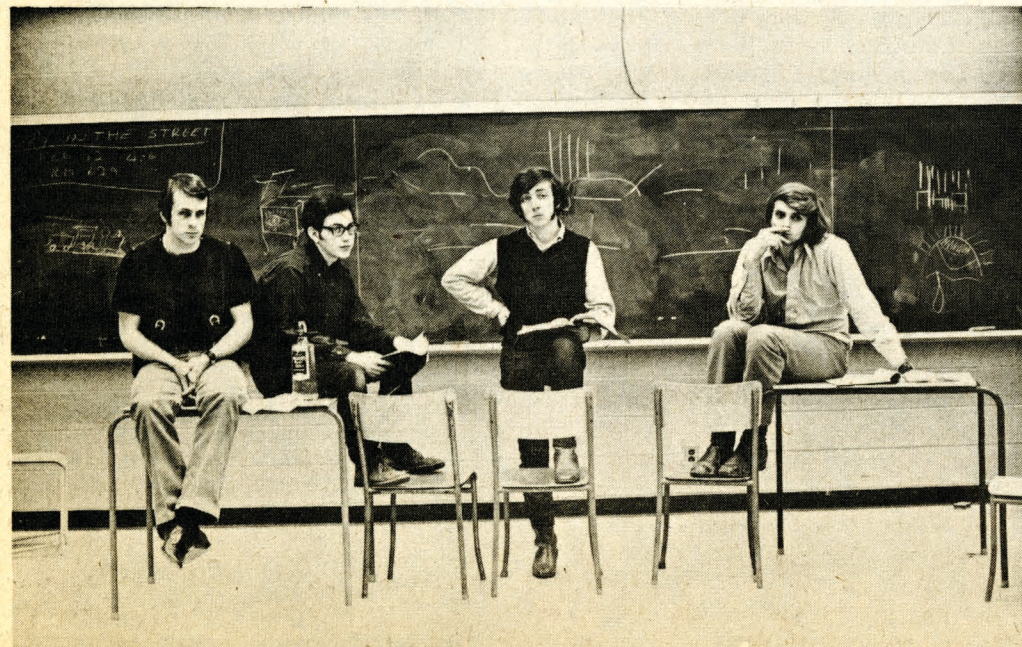
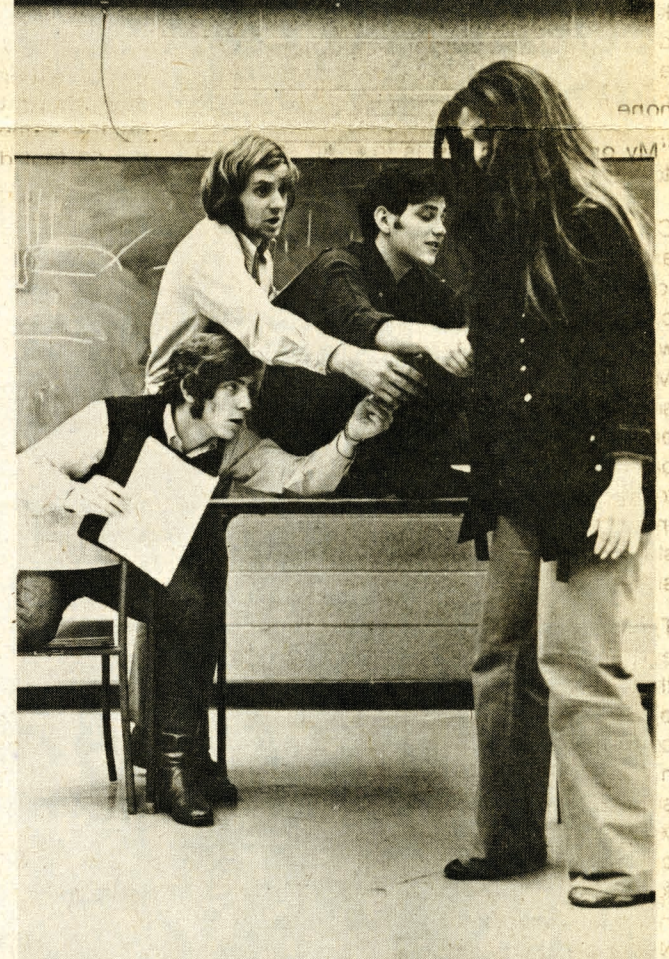
The turning point for Fialkowski came when he played a major role in the high school production of "Billy Budd" in which he was the First Officer. That seemed to top off his growing interest in high school dramatics which included other parts in "Twelfth Night" as well as some contemporary work and several one-act plays. Fialkowski even credits his experience in the school choir with helping him in his present role as the Boyfriend, which calls for a strong tenor.

Fialkowski's assault on the world of professional acting

met at first with a thud. After being invited to take part in a Larry Kent film with a script that made his hair stand on end, he decided to approach the CBC but has so far restricted himself to exploratory interviews. "I just haven't moved out enough," he admitted. But television does have its limits for Fialkowski: "The scripts are usually terrible and often the direction is bad," he complained.

Fialkowski pointed out that he was one of a fortunate few. "Luckily, my parents can help me out a little so I can go to England for a while to see how things shape up over there," he said. "Many of the people who want to act here have to work backstage just because they need the money. Some people are really strapped for cash," he stressed.

Referring to his acting career at Sir George, Fialkowski pointed out that he wasn't a Theatre Arts major though he had gained almost all of his experience in that section. In the last two years he has not done any technical work and admits "I barely know how to put up a light. Now that the program has been reorganized I am beginning to get some technical experience," he said. But there seems little doubt that Fialkowski has an acting career in mind.





# THE WEEK AT SGWU

Send notices and photos of coming events to the Information Office, room 211 of the Norris Building, or phone 879-2867. Deadline for submission is noon **Wednesday** for the following week's events.

## MONDAY 23

### CLASSES CANCELLED

CHANNEL 4: "Communications and Society" - a series of videotaped lectures by Prof. Charles Siepman, N.Y.U.; this week "A Conversation with James E. Allen" at 10, 10:30 a.m., 2 and 2:30 p.m. through Friday; may be viewed in individual carrels in H-523.

INSTRUCTIONAL TECHNOLOGY: NFB films on the institutional message (for better and for worse) - "The Searching Man", "Better Housing for the Atlantic Provinces", and "Fields of Sacrifice" at 3:45 and 8:30 p.m. in H-937; free, all are invited.

DOUGLASS BURNS CLARKE THEATRE: The Georgian Players production of the musical comedy "The Boyfriend" at 8:30 p.m. through Saturday; \$1.75 for students, \$2.50 for the public.

PRE-PACKAGED REGISTRATION: Course preference forms available through Friday on the mezzanine of the Hall Building and at the Records Office in the Norris Building.

"CAN YOU ALL HEAR AT THE BACK?": A lawyer tells students about the potential hassles in leases on University channel 9 at 10, 11 a.m., 1, 3 and 6 p.m. Monday through Friday.

WEISSMAN and MAIN GALLERIES: SGWU Collection - new acquisitions.

SMALL GALLERY: Drawings of Gecin Sindon.

ARTS FACULTY COUNCIL: Meeting in H-635 at 3 p.m.

## TUESDAY 24

### CLASSES CANCELLED

## WEDNESDAY 25

### CLASSES CANCELLED

QUANTITATIVE METHODS DEPARTMENT: Dr. W. E. Deming, consultant, speaks on "Popular Misconceptions about Statistical Design" in H-408 at 10:30 a.m.

PHILOSOPHY and MATHEMATICS DEPARTMENTS and the PHILOSOPHY CLUB: Bertrand Russell memorial meeting at 4 p.m. in H-920 with talks by profs W.R. Fraser and M.E. Szabo.

GEORGIAN MARKETING SOCIETY: First Montreal Marketing Congress on the seventh floor of the Hall Building from 12:30 to 4 p.m. with keynote address "Is Marketing Your Thing?" by Logan R. Brown, president of Robin Hood Multifoods Ltd.; tickets (\$2 for students, \$3 for professors, \$5 for businessmen) available on the third floor of the Norris Building or at N-025-6. Further information at 879-4584.

## Waiting for Artulio



Students gather at noon to cheer their closed-circuit favorites on the Artulio Twindleseed Chorale and Chorus, a TV Sir George show featuring Theatre Arts' talent.

## THURSDAY 26

CONSERVATORY OF CINEMATOGRAPHIC ART: "The Cat and the Canary" (Paul Leni, 1927) with Laura La Plante, Creighton Hale and Gertrude Astor at 8:30 p.m. in H-110; 50c for students, 75c for the public.

## FRIDAY 27

UNIVERSITY COUNCIL: Meeting in H-769 at 2 p.m.

BASKETBALL: OSLAA playoffs at Loyola, 6:30 p.m.

GEORGIAN FILM SOCIETY: Another mini-festival with "Abbott & Costello Meet Frankenstein" (1948) at 1:05 p.m., and "The Jade Mask", a 1945 Charlie Chan with Sidney Toler, at 2:25 p.m.; both for 25c in H-110.

GEORGIAN FILM SOCIETY: The Royal Shakespeare Company in Peter Brooks' version of "The Persecution and Assassination of Jean-Paul Marat as Performed by the Inmates of the Asylum of Charenton under the Direction of the Marquis de Sade" at 7 and 9:30 p.m. in H-110 for 75c.

## SATURDAY 28

HOCKEY: OSLAA playoffs at Sherbrooke, 4:45 p.m.

GEORGIAN FILM SOCIETY: "Can Hieronymus Merkin Ever Forget Mercey Humpe and Find True Happiness?" with Anthony Newley at 7 and 9:30 p.m. in H-110 for 75c.

## SUNDAY 1

MASS: 11:30 a.m. at 2185 Bishop.

CHANNEL 9: "Can you all hear at the back?" with Dr. Charles Siepman on "The Case for Instructional Television" and a French 211 language lab at 1 p.m. on Cable TV.

HOCKEY: OSLAA finals at Sherbrooke, 7:30 p.m.

CZECHOSLOVAKIAN STUDENT ASSOCIATION: "Soukroma Vichrice" in H-110 at 8 p.m.; 50c for students, 75c for non-students.

### ***Russell commemoration Feb. 20***

Bertrand Russell will be commemorated by the Canadian Society for the History and Philosophy of Science this Friday, February 20, at 6 p.m. in room H-1070.

Short talks will be given by Prof. Raymond Klibansky, president of the Society, and by profs Mario Bunge from McGill and Gonzalo Edmondo Reyes from l'Université de Montréal.

### **No Evening Division CEGEP at SGWU**

Information published in the press may have given rise to some misunderstanding about SGWU plans for the Evening Division.

The policy for both Evening and Day Divisions was established by University Council in November 1969. Starting in the 1971-72 academic year, the new undergraduate program will be introduced in both the Evening and the Day Divisions. Entry will normally be from CEGEP or a university collegial level program. For candidates of 21 or over who have not passed through the collegial level, and who perform satisfactorily on appropriate tests, a preparatory six-course program will be offered in the Evening Division. On successful completion of this program they will be admissible to the university program.

There will be no collegial-level program in the Evening Division - either in 1970-71 or subsequently.

### **SGWU ISSUES & EVENTS**

SGWU ISSUES & EVENTS is published weekly by the Information Office of Sir George Williams University, Montreal. The Editorial Offices are located in room 211 of the Norris Building, 1435 Drummond Street, Montreal 107, Quebec. Telephone 879-2867.

Michael Sheldon  
Malcolm Stone  
Joel McCormick